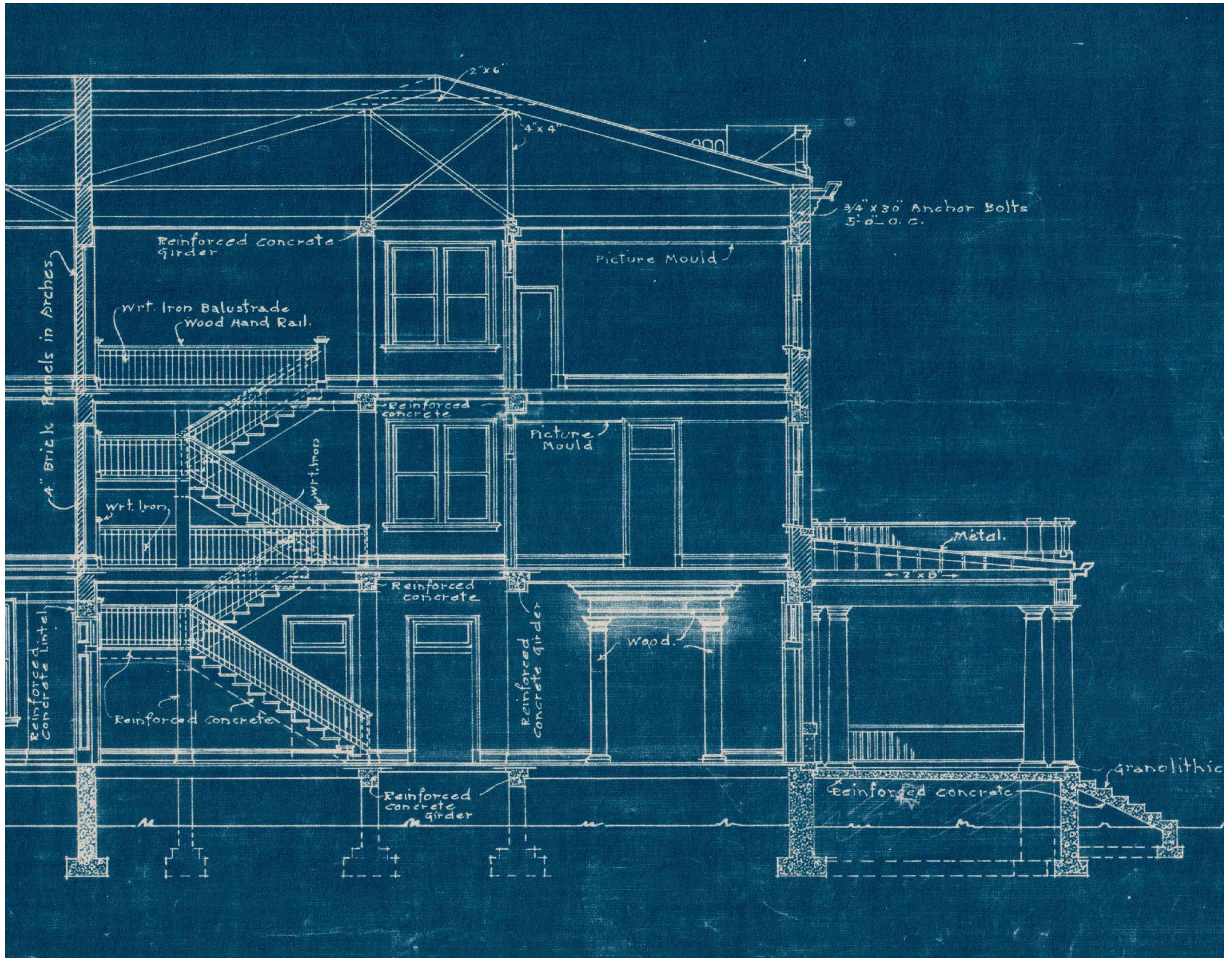


HISTORIC VIRGINIA HALL

DESIGN ♦ CONSTRUCTION ♦ RENOVATION

Open Stairs



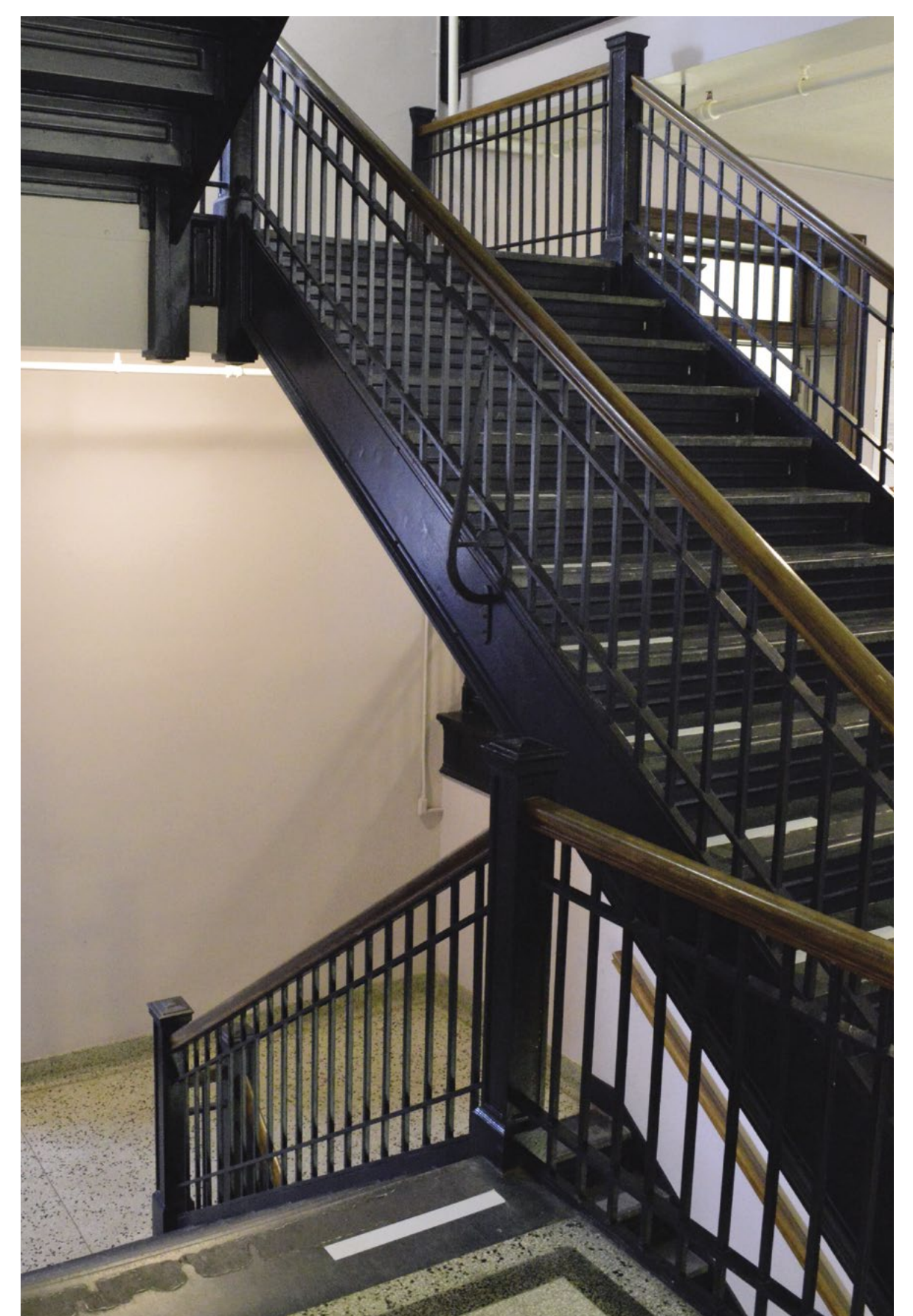
Section of open staircase design for North Wing of Virginia Hall. Notes show original 1914 concrete column design. When built, the stairwell included more modern cast iron columns for support.

Image: UMW Office of Facilities

The graceful open stairwells in both the north and south wing of Virginia Hall were innovative designs when built. The open stair design allowed natural light and positive ventilation, and created a space for easier communication for residents traveling between floors. Because of modern fire safety regulations, these stairs could not be built today.

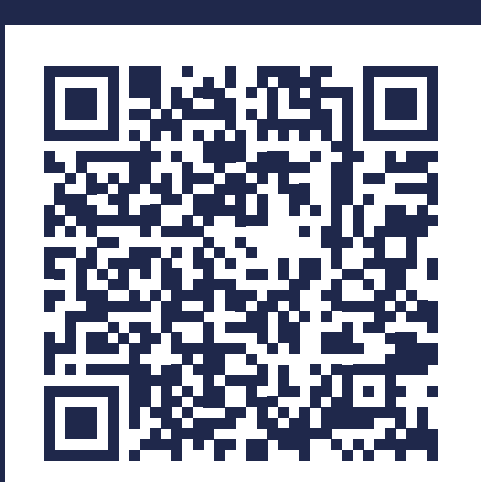
When originally designed in 1914, architect Charles M. Robinson's plans indicate concrete columns on the lowest level to support the staircase. In the specifications used by contractors to construct the building, Robinson redesigned the supports as the paneled cast iron seen today.

Another change in the design was added with the construction of the south wing in 1934. Additional metal scrollwork was added to support the handrails. During the 2021 renovation, the scroll design was replicated and added in the north wing stairs.



The innovative open stairwell design allows light and air to flow easily through the building.

Image: Sam Biggers '16, Kjellstrom + Lee Construction



Scan for accessible PDF

